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The Westfield Leader

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GOAL!GOAL!GOAL!...A North Plainfield Fire Dragons player, left, celebrates a goal scored against the Somerset Hills Cyclones during 8- and 9-year-old Division No. 5 Westfield Cup soccer action last Saturday. Please see more pictures in sports section.

Gretchen Bowman for *The Westfield Leader*



GETTING A FACELIFT...Renovation work has begun on buildings located at 159-169 East Broad Street. Apartments on the second and third floors are being completely renovated. Classic Thyme will be joined on the ground floor by Nine West in the old Epstein Bootery space, while Ann Taylor will be moving into space previously filled by Milady's and Village Curtains.

Paul J. Peyton for *The Westfield Leader*

HIGHER METER FEES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Garage Proposed To Solve Town's Parking Problem

By **KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Transportation and Parking Committee of the Town Council held the second in a three-part series of open public forums May 20 regarding parking problems in Westfield.

The first meeting was held on May 7. The committee, led by Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, Jr., held a round table discussion with residents and merchants regarding the lack of parking in the downtown. Other members of the committee include Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, First Ward Councilman Gregory S. McDermott and Fourth Ward Councilwoman Janis Fried Weinstein.

According to Councilman Sullivan, the 1995 Parking Task Force Report done by Westfield Main Street and the RBA Group was endorsed by the council's committee, but was never brought to the full council for a vote.

In a press release issued to *The Westfield Leader*, Councilman Sullivan stated that in regard to the parking problem, "we must move with a sense of urgency to address the parking issues that our community faces."

"Parking improvements in our central business district will top the agenda of this committee during the upcoming weeks with an end result of actions — not just another study," he added.

According to statements made at a recent Westfield Town Council meeting, the committee would like Westfield residents and business owners to add their input to the ongoing parking problem, and would like comments on the 1995 report before moving to the full council for adoption of a new parking plan.

According to Mayor Jardim, the committee would like to move forward on the plan, after the public meetings, to have a new parking

ordinance introduced in July, adopted in August and implemented by September.

Among some of the 23 suggestions listed in the 1995 report are: re-stripe the Prospect and Elm Street parking lots to increase the number of spaces; pilot a program for a satellite lot with shuttle bus service to the train station; install centralized pay stations to replace meters in lots; establish a means of providing parking for downtown employees in unused "outbound commuter" spots, and create a position of a parking manager.

Possible long-range goals include the design and construction of a parking deck and the amendment to an existing town ordinance to clearly ban "meter feeding." This is a term used for motorists who continually put coins in the meter after the limit on parking has been reached.

A parking deck and "meter feeding" were the two most discussed topics at last week's public meeting. Many merchants spoke out against Westfield employees feeding the meters with coins every two hours.

Merchants expressed frustration at the lack of parking for customers in the two-hour spots for all or part of a business day.

Chari Amster-Roth, owner of Doris Amster on Elm Street, stated, "I can't count how many times I've heard customers say that they tried to shop in my store, rode around the block a few times, couldn't find a parking place, and left. The parking problem is hurting my business."

Councilman Sullivan responded by saying the committee had suggested that the on-street meter rates be increased to 50 cents per hour, as opposed to the present 25 cents per hour. Also suggested was reallocation of parking spaces to create more off-street public lots.

Mrs. Amster-Roth went on to ex-

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Rialto Owner Unveils Theater's New Look

By **SUZETTE STALKER**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

It was the day supporters of the Rialto Theatre had been waiting for — the grand reopening of the corner movie house beloved by generations of Westfielders, yet which less than two years ago had seemed destined to go the way of the silent film.

Last Thursday afternoon, theater operator Jesse Sayegh, who purchased the theater a year ago, welcomed town officials and other guests to the newly-renovated Rialto for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception in the lobby of the theater at East Broad Street and Central Avenue.

Now housing six screens, the 75-year-old landmark has been enhanced with a fresh decor and seating capacity for approximately 1,000 patrons. The lobby has been revamped, and new carpeting, seats and lavatories have also been installed.

All the auditoriums are now equipped with stereo sound, and the two largest — located on the ground floor — feature digital sound, according to the theater owner.

Mr. Sayegh doubled the original three screens at the Rialto by creating two additional auditoriums on the first floor, which are separated by a corridor, and by dividing the balcony into two sections. The theater remained open while work on the building was completed.

During three months of renovations, Mr. Sayegh additionally refurbished the aging building's facade and marquee. The exterior, now accented with green awnings, was draped with red, white and blue bunting for the pre-Memorial Day weekend celebration. Mr. Sayegh confirmed the cost of upgrading the theater was upward of \$750,000.

Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, who helped Mr. Sayegh cut the ribbon along with Cranford Mayor Wally K. Shackell, Jr., called the rebirth of the town's sole remaining movie theater "a great occasion" in Westfield.

Mr. Sayegh, who owns cinemas in a handful of New Jersey municipalities, acquired the Cranford Theatre earlier this year. He is making similar renovations to that location, which he said will serve as a "twin sister" to the Rialto when it reopens in about four weeks.

"It gives me great pleasure to be part of this community," said Mr. Sayegh

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A NEW BEGINNING...Rialto Theatre owner Jesse Sayegh, left, holds the ribbon for Cranford Mayor Wally K. Shackell, Jr., center, and Westfield Mayor Thomas C. Jardim during the grand re-opening of the expanded theater last Thursday. The Cranford Theatre, also owned by Mr. Sayegh, will be a twin to the Westfield movie house.

William A. Burke for *The Westfield Leader*

Freeholders Approve Amended Waste Plan For Incinerator Lease

By **PAUL J. PEYTON**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders last Thursday approved several changes to the county's Solid Waste Management Plan, thus paving the way for the lease of the county's Resource Recovery Facility, commonly referred to as the garbage incinerator, to Ogdin Martin Systems of Union, Inc., the manufacturer of the facility.

As part of the proposed lease agreement, all 21 municipalities have been invited to sign 25-year contracts with the Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA) to continue dumping at the incinerator. The authority now plans to have the deal in place by Monday, June 15, a delay over its initial deadline of January 1.

Seven towns, among them Westfield, Scotch Plains and Fanwood, have opted against the arrangement since they do not provide for garbage collection in local property taxes.

In order to sign on with the county, a community must either contract for solid waste disposal or collect trash as a municipal service. The other 14 towns in the county have waste disposal included in their budgets.

Towns and haulers will be charged \$50 a ton during the length of the contract to dump at the incinerator, with increases based on hikes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Under the lease, Union County would guarantee 250,000 tons of solid waste to the facility over the length of the contract. Ogdin Martin will pay \$175 million in lease payments which will be used towards the outstanding bonds on the incinerator.

Additional revenue will be raised through the inclusion of an Environmental Investment Charge (EIC) to be included on all trash generated in the county.

The Union County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) had requested that the board not take action on the lease deal or amendment to the solid waste plan at this time.

Eric D. Wisler, of the law firm of

Decotis, Fitzpatrick & Gluck of Teaneck, special counsel to the UCUA, explained to the board that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) essentially approved the amended document on April 30. The plan was submitted to the NJDEP following approval by the Freeholder board in December.

In order to stay competitive in a free market system for solid waste disposal, the UCUA dropped the tipping fee charged to haulers to dispose of garbage at the incinerator from \$83.05 to \$50 a ton.

In order to keep the facility financially afloat, Ogdin Martin was permitted to accept waste on a "spot market" basis. This is defined as waste from communities or haulers who need a temporary site for disposal.

Spot market waste was being accepted for as low as \$35 a ton. Currently, that number is now around \$42.

In response to the loss of regulatory control of the solid waste industry, the UCUA and the county have proposed a restructuring plan for the debt on the incinerator. This plan addresses the estimated \$16 million loss in revenues, or \$2 million a month, since the \$50 tipping fee was imposed on November 10.

Ogdin Martin is said to have incurred a loss of \$125,000 a month, an amount that is expected to reach \$750,000 come June 15. This figure includes cash flow for daily operational expenses and funds needed to pay the outstanding debt on the facility, which stands at \$293,670,000.

Since the drop in the tipping fee, the incinerator is said to be running at about 95 percent of capacity when all four its burners are operating.

Among the changes the NJDEP has sought are agreements with the J&J Recycling Company, Inc., in Elizabeth, and the Linden Landfill. J&J currently has the UCUA contract to process and market bulky, vegetative and industrial waste. The

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Council OKs Assessments For Road Improvements Along Four Town Streets

By **PAUL J. PEYTON**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Town Council opted to stay the course Tuesday night by approving resolutions confirming assessments for improvements along four streets in town.

The assessments, totaling \$123,138, include curbing and shoulder improvements completed the past few years along Stoneleigh Park, Pearl, Wyoming and Pierson Streets.

The assessments are the first ones approved by the governing body since the council changed its road improve-

ments policy in 1996. Prior to that year, the council required that curbing be included in all road reconstruction projects.

Also, the town assessed property owners for the curbs and paving of the shoulder of the road, with the town picking up the cost of the remainder of the paving under a program referred to as "center strip paving." The new policy is referred to as "full width paving."

Two years ago, the council amended that policy by removing curbing as a requirement for road improvement projects. Also, under the new policy the costs for road shoulder improvements are assumed by the town. The new policy, thus, eliminates tax assessments for residents.

Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko explained that, had the council chosen to have the town pay the tab for improvements to the four roads on Tuesday night's agenda, these costs would have become "unfunded debt" to be added to the 1999 municipal budget as "deferred charges."

Mr. Gottko said this year's budget includes \$240,500 in deferred charges, with unfunded debt totaling \$1.2 million.

The shoulder improvements for the four streets amount to just under \$50,000. The administrator noted that \$70,000 in what he described as "unfunded assessments" was included in the spending plan for five other streets repaired under a previous project. Collectively, the nine streets are the last remaining improvements on which there is outstanding debt under the old policy.

If the council chose to fund the shoulder repairs, as included in the new policy, for all of these streets, the cost would come to \$122,000. Mr. Gottko explained.

In response to inquiries from Third

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Chamber Hopes Third Time Will Be Charm for 'Fling'

Canceled due to inclement weather on two occasions last month, the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce has rescheduled the fourth annual "Spring Fling" Street Fair in downtown Westfield for this Sunday, May 31, from noon until 6 p.m.

The event will feature an array of activities and exhibits for the entire family, including art, crafts, food, music and children's events. Admission is free.

The following streets will be closed on Sunday beginning at 6 a.m. to vehicular traffic for the activities: East Broad Street from North Avenue to Central Avenue, all of Quimby Street, Elm Street from North Avenue to the Texaco Station, and Prospect Street from North Avenue to Ferris Place.

Parking is prohibited in the "Spring Fling" area all day Sunday. Downtown businesses in the area should advise employees not to park in the activity area or in the municipal lots

surrounding the activity area. Downtown residents are reminded not to park on those streets during the street festival, but to park instead in municipal lots, which will have access from the closed streets if cars are parked by 8 a.m. and remain in the lots until 7:30 p.m.

Pets, skateboarding, and roller blading are prohibited in the "Spring Fling" area. This rule is for the safety of attendees of all ages, and also for the safety of the animals.

"Spring Fling" attendees are encouraged to park in the train station lot on South Avenue. This will provide the closest access to the activity area, with easy access to North Avenue through the new underpass, recently opened by NJ Transit.

For further information, please call the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce at (908) 233-3021. There will be no rainout date for the event due to prior commitments by the event's promoter, Advertising Alliance.



DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS...Members of the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad stand next to one of the squad's ambulances during an open house at its Watterson Street facility last Wednesday. Pictured, left to right, are: squad members Tom Cornish, Squad Training Sergeant Rich Jackson, Jen Cocchia, Robyn Feldman, Jim D'Ambrosio and Kristin Steinbrecher. The open house coincided with Emergency Medical Services Week, held May 18 through May 22.

Gretchen Bowman for *The Westfield Leader*



A SPECIAL THANK YOU... Congressman Bob Franks presents Dayle Maloney of Westfield with a certificate of appreciation during the fifth annual Seventh Congressional District Volunteer of the Year Ceremony which took place recently in Plainfield. In observance of National Volunteers Week, Mr. Franks recognized more than 80 individuals and groups from throughout Central New Jersey for their hard work and dedication to the community.

Council OKs Assessments For Road Improvements

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Ward Councilman John J. Walsh, Mr. Gottko said if the council opted to pay the cost of shoulder repairs for all the projects, the unfunded debt in next year's budget would rise to \$2 million.

At its May 13 meeting, the council approved several expenditures which increased the unfunded debt item in the 1999 budget by around \$1 million. Among these costs are \$355,000 for sanitary sewer improvements throughout the town, fees for consultants to investigate the town's storm and sanitary sewer systems, replacement of the Orenda Circle sanitary sewer system, and installation of sewers on Upper Sedgewick Avenue.

Another \$150,000 was added to future debt for improvements on Prospect Street between Brightwood and Madison Avenues. The town will be reimbursed for this project through the state's Transportation Trust Fund.

An additional \$295,000 was authorized by the council to pay for recreational facility improvements including the restroom and a picnic shelter at Tamaques Park; reconstruction of Sycamore Field, and a sprinkler system for Mindowaskin Park.

The council over the past few years has been appropriating \$240,500 annually to pay off the town's outstanding debt. Three years ago, the council was paying \$504,000 towards its debt.

"You (the council) have brought the deferred charges line item down but you are increasing unfunded debt," Mr. Gottko further explained.

After hearing Mr. Gottko's explanation, Councilman Walsh opted to vote against approval of the assessments.

"The impact is not as severe as it would have been if we had to fund that (the assessments) this year," he said.

Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, Jr., citing the practice by the council the past three years of not assessing for street shoulder reconstruction, told his fellow council members that he could not support the resolution.

Second Ward Councilman and Finance Committee Chairman James J. Gruba said residents on the streets that were improved had come before the council seeking the repairs. He said residents had agreed to pay for the assessments as part of agreements with the town.

Prior to the council's vote, Ann Harris, of Linden Avenue, commended the council for its new policy. She said Mountainside has non-curbed streets and its roads are in good condition.

In other business, the council decided to pull a resolution that would have authorized the municipality to sell a town-owned lot, located at 708 Sherman Street, at public auction.

During the council's pre-conference meeting, Building and Town Property Committee Chairman Matthew P. Albano, who represents the Second Ward, said he was "uncomfortable" with the sale, noting it appeared to be contrary to council's policy.

He said, in his opinion, the town's

Artslink
2x5½

Freeholders Approve Amended Waste Plan

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residue from this waste is disposed of at the Linden Landfill, also by UCUA contract.

However, as a result of a 1996 Federal court ruling which essentially deregulated the solid waste industry, the NJDEP said contracts for disposal of these types of waste need to be issued through the competitive bid process from firms in or outside of Union County and New Jersey, thus allowing for a system of interstate commerce in accordance with the court decision.

The UCUA, however, has gained NJDEP approval to continue flow control over these types of waste. The UCUA will receive bids on the processing and disposal of commercial and bulky waste contracts on Friday, June 5.

Another area of concern for the NJDEP was the EIC. The fee, originally set at \$18.06, is included in the \$50 fee being offered to towns as part of the municipal contracts. It will also be collected on all trash not disposed of at the incinerator through a system of weigh stations.

The final EIC fee proposed has not been settled on at this time. In addition to stranded debt, the EIC includes stranded host community fee and stranded administrative components and transition costs.

The UCUA has proposed to increase the stranded debt component of the EIC from \$13.53 to \$13.98 per ton. The state Local Finance Board has approved an additional \$1.85 charge on top of the \$13.98, should the lease not be implemented by June 15. This fee, UCUA officials have indicated through the plan amendment, is expected to be sufficient to fund pre-restructuring transaction costs for an additional three months.

Under the amended Solid Waste Management Plan, the county's Department of Health would now take on the cost of enforcing the solid waste plan, including collection of the EIC. These costs have been estimated by the UCUA at \$500,000 for enforcement and \$1,553,119 for op-

erating and administrative costs.

The UCUA budget is to be slashed from \$4.1 million to \$1.53 million as Ogden Martin takes over the operation of the incinerator.

The court decision ended the state's system of waste flow controls. Prior to the ruling, each county dictated where its waste was to be disposed of through their solid waste management plans. The court ruled that the waste flow controls violated the interstate commerce clause of the United States Constitution.

William G. Kravec, II, of Westfield, Chairman of SWAC, urged the board not to take further action, noting — among other concerns — that legislation introduced in the State Senate on May 15 would place a 3 percent tax on all solid waste in the state and would, more importantly, not allow the imposition of an EIC fee. The legislation is just one of many at the state and Federal levels aimed at the solid waste industry.

Kerri Blanchard, of Rahway, representing the Concerned Citizens of Union County, a group that has long opposed the incinerator, said she was strongly opposed to the county and UCUA "bailing out a private corporation (Ogden Martin)."

She accused the board of "steam rolling" ahead on the lease plan despite the opposition by SWAC. She said approval of the plan amendment places the liability of the outstanding bonds on the incinerator on the county's taxpayers.

Bob Carson, of Rahway, also of the Concerned Citizens, cited health risks of keeping the incinerator in operation, including dangers of miscarriages for pregnant women.

Daniel P. Sullivan, Chairman of the Freeholder board, said the current crisis involving the financial stability of the incinerator was "dumped" on the Freeholders.

He indicated that failure by the board to act quickly on the lease deal would wind up costing the taxpayers of Union County "millions of dollars."

Rialto Owner Unveils Theater's New Look

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during the ribbon-cutting ceremony, adding that he enjoyed fulfilling the challenge of reviving the cherished movie theater.

Mayor Jardim thanked "the many dedicated people" who rallied to preserve the Rialto after United Artists, its former owner, announced in 1996 that it was selling off many of its smaller theaters in order to concentrate on multiplexes.

He particularly cited the efforts of the "Save the Rialto" Committee, an outgrowth of Westfield MainStreet, which was formed after residents learned a developer had acquired a contract option to buy the theater and was planning to lease it to The Gap, Inc. for a Banana Republic store.

The committee, which counted real estate and theater industry experts among its ranks, organized volunteers in a grass-roots campaign to keep the Rialto open.

Members investigated ways in which the theater could be made more economically viable, and petitioned corporate executives at The Gap, Inc.'s San Francisco headquarters not to open a store there.

The clothing chain eventually withdrew its plans, choosing instead to place its Banana Republic store at the former Sealions location on Central Avenue. Shortly afterwards, the developer bowed out of his option to purchase the theater.

Mr. Sayegh subsequently entered into an agreement with United Artists to acquire the Rialto, which was finalized last June. He also plans to locate the offices of his company, CJM Entertainment, in the theater building.

"We are a town of good neighbors," remarked Mayor Jardim, who acknowledged the support shown to the Rialto by local merchants and others such as Debbie Schmidt, Executive Director of the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce, and Michael LaPlace, Executive Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation.

"They will be leading the way, leading the charge of the revitalization of the downtown," the Mayor remarked.

Mr. Sayegh revealed that although business dipped somewhat while the theater was being renovated, it has now picked up again. He added that a couple of movies currently playing there have even sold out on occasion.

Westfielders regard the Rialto not only as a safe, convenient place to see a movie, but as an integral part of the downtown economy. It is also viewed as an enduring aspect of the town's heritage, having stood the test of time from the vaudeville era through the age of high-tech cinematic blockbusters.

Garage Proposed to Solve Town's Parking Problem

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

plain that she purchases parking permits for all of her employees and that they report being left with trying to find a place in the lot assigned to park their car.

She suggested that a parking garage was an overdue addition to the downtown area. Many at the meeting agreed.

The committee was receptive to all ideas mentioned at the meeting, but reminded those attending that the expense of a parking garage would come from taxpayer dollars.

When it was suggested that NJ Transit could help fund the project, Councilman Sullivan said that the committee did not favor building a garage that would not put the needs of Westfield residents first. He explained that if NJ Transit did get involved, then parking at the station would be open to many other surrounding communities.

On its immediate agenda, the committee wants to look into the prospects of having parking attendants in downtown lots; utilizing the existing lots by giving more in-bound commuters permits or perhaps decals, changing meter parking from two hours to one hour, and increasing penalty

systems for expired meters.

As adjournment time quickly approached, Councilman Sullivan announced that there would be a third public meeting held before the issue moves on to the full council in July.

The tentative date for this meeting is Thursday, June 4, at 8 p.m. Councilman Sullivan added that if anyone wanted a copy of the full 1995 report, copies could be obtained from the Westfield Memorial Library or the Town Clerk's Office in the Municipal Building.

He added that residents could also obtain the report from the Internet at www.members.home.com/nsullivan.

Erratum

In last week's front page story on the Westfield Board of Education, Carol Joyce was incorrectly referred to as the Curriculum Director for kindergarten through grade 2. She is actually a kindergarten teacher at the Washington Elementary School in Westfield.

Also, Kathleen Hintze was incorrectly identified as Kathleen Hunt. We apologize for the errors.

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

TUESDAY, MAY 19

• A Westfield resident reported that his watch, valued at \$540, was stolen from a locker at the Board of Education field house on Rahway Avenue.

• Ronnie Settles, 37, of Plainfield was arrested in the 600 block of North Avenue, West, and charged with driving with a revoked license and on a contempt of court warrant from Scotch Plains Municipal Court, authorities said. The total amount of bail was set at \$1,100.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

• A bicycle valued at \$400 was reported stolen from the side of a garage on Hillcrest Avenue.

THURSDAY, MAY 21

• Police reported an incident of criminal mischief in which a vehicle's rear window was broken while the car was parked on Girard Avenue.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

• Emmanuel Karasmanis, 25, of Harrison and Teddy Prokos, 21, of Clark were arrested in the 300 block of South Avenue, West, and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana,

according to police. Each of the suspects was released on \$250 bail.

• Irene Lacquaniti, 53, of Kenilworth was arrested and charged with shoplifting \$270 worth of clothing from a North Avenue department store, authorities said. She was released on \$275 bail.

SUNDAY, MAY 24

• Alex Navarrette, 22, of Plainfield was arrested and charged as an unlicensed driver on South Avenue near the Garwood border, according to police. He was released after posting \$225 bail.

MONDAY, MAY 25

• A burglary was reported at a local animal hospital in which a small rear window was broken and \$20 in currency was stolen, police confirmed.

• Two Westfield residents reported thefts from their automobiles in separate incidents at a Trinity Place condominium complex, according to police.

In the first incident, a Pioneer AM/FM stereo cassette player and four cassettes were removed, while in the second incident, \$5 in change and a black leather bag containing old car parts was taken.

WESTFIELD FIRE BLOTTER

MONDAY, MAY 18

• Four hundred block of Scotch Plains Avenue — power line down.

• Three hundred block of Clark Street — unintentional alarm.

TUESDAY, MAY 19

• Three hundred block of First Street — system malfunction.

• Five hundred block of Springfield Avenue — auto accident.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20

• Eight hundred block of Shadowlawn Drive — lock out.

• Three hundred block of Elm Street — electrical short.

• Eight hundred block of Rahway Avenue — system malfunction.

• Nine hundred block of Talcott Road — system malfunction.

• Seven hundred block of Norman Place — power line down.

FRIDAY, MAY 22

• Nine hundred block of South Avenue West — wire down.

• Sixteen hundred block of Rahway Avenue — system malfunction.

• Fifteen hundred block of Lamberts Mill Road — good intent call.

• Eight hundred block of Talcott Drive — wire down.

SATURDAY, MAY 23

• Five hundred block of Springfield Avenue — system malfunction.

• Five hundred block of Springfield Avenue — system malfunction.

• Six hundred block of Kimball Avenue — system malfunction.

• One hundred block of East Broad Street — gas odor investigation.

• One hundred block of Summit Court — propane tank leaking.

SUNDAY, MAY 24

• One hundred block of Linden Avenue — carbon monoxide detector activation.

• Seven hundred block of Austin Street — alarm activation.

• One hundred block of Elm Street — electrical short.

New Business Administrator Named for Westfield Schools

Robert Alan Berman has been appointed as Business Administrator/Board Secretary for the Westfield Public Schools, Dr. William J. Foley, Superintendent of Schools, has announced.

Mr. Berman will replace Dr. Robert C. Rader, who is retiring in June. Currently employed as the Assistant Superintendent for Business with the Randolph Public Schools in Morris County, Mr. Berman brings more than 20 years experience in school business administration to the Westfield school district.

Prior to his arrival in Randolph in 1992, he held similar financial positions with the Middletown, Franklin Township and Irvington school districts.

A graduate of Fairleigh Dickinson University in Rutherford with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, he earned a master's degree in Educational Administration from Kean University, and holds a New Jersey State Certificate as a School Business Administrator.

"Robert Berman comes to us highly recommended from Randolph Public Schools," Dr. Foley said on announcing the appointment. "We welcome his scope of experience, and are certain he will be an asset to our administration."

Also appointed to the Business Office is Tamar Sydney, the new Assistant Business Manager, replacing Jean Poquette, who is retiring.

Walk to End Local Hunger Has Most Successful Event

The Walk to End Local Hunger, sponsored by the Coalition for Hunger Awareness of Union and Somerset Counties, had its most successful walk ever on May 3 in Mindowaskin Park in Westfield. Over 2000 citizens joined the walk which offered three routes through the Town of Westfield.

This is the largest number of walkers to have participated in the Hunger Walks since its inception six years ago. These walkers, along with many generous corporate sponsors, were responsible for raising more than \$13,000 for the Coalition to distribute to food pantries and soup kitchens in Union and Somerset Counties.

This marks the largest amount of money raised by the Coalition in a single year, said Michelle Ehrich, a spokeswoman for the group.

The Coalition, founded by the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey in 1992, is a group of concerned synagogues, churches, mosques, non-profit and civic groups who raise funds to support local food pantries, soup kitchens and other food programs

in their hands-on effort to alleviate hunger among local residents.

The Walk had participation from many local community groups, houses of worship and schools. Also joining the walk for the five-mile segment was Westfield Mayor and Honorary Walk Chairman, Thomas C. Jardim. At the rally, after the Walk, Chris Calloway of the Giants football team signed autographs and made a brief speech.

Other speakers and noted guests included First Ward Councilwoman Gail Vernick, Ruth Frankel of Warren, and Elaine Hochheiser of Scotch Plains, Claire Gottlieb of Warren and Michelle Ehrich of Westfield, Coalition Co-Chairwomen.

During the year, the Coalition provides speakers who discuss local hunger facts and issues for interested community groups, houses of worship and schools.

For information about participating in the 1999 walk, joining the coalition, arranging for a speaker or providing corporate sponsorship, please contact Luis Fleischman at (908) 889-5335, Extension No. 325.



WALKING TO END HUNGER...Westfield Mayor and Honorary Chairman of the Walk to End Local Hunger, Thomas C. Jardim, left, is shown here with Lawrence Lerner of Warren during the May 3 event.